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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**May 1, 2007**

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### **FOUR RUSSIANS INDICTED IN IDENTITY THEFT AND FRAUD RING**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today the unsealing of a Superseding Indictment charging four Russian men with participating in a wide-ranging conspiracy to purchase merchandise and obtain credit using stolen identity information. Two of the defendants, ROMAN KARELOV, 18, and OLEG V. UMAROV, 20, both from Russia, appeared yesterday in United States District Court in Sacramento before Magistrate Judge Dale A. Drozd, where they were ordered detained without bail pending further appearances in the case. KARELOV, UMAROV, and a third defendant, RADIK E. NIZAMOV, also of Russia, were arrested by FBI agents on April 13, 2007, in Baltimore, where all three were temporarily residing. NIZAMOV is currently being transported to Sacramento in the custody of the United States Marshals Service. A fourth defendant, ALEKSEY CHUGAEV, 24, is a fugitive believed to be in southern Russia.

The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with the assistance of the Davis Police Department, the United States Secret Service, the United States Postal Inspection Service, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner, who is prosecuting the case, the Superseding Indictment and a Complaint filed earlier in the case allege that CHUGAEV, KARELOV, NIZAMOV, UMAROV and others were operating a conspiracy in which they used identity and credit information stolen from multiple persons to purchase merchandise including credit cards, computers, jewelry, clothing and other items from various United States businesses and then transfer the fraudulently-obtained money and goods back to Russia. CHUGAEV orchestrated the conspiracy from Russia, with the assistance of several young Russians in the United States, including KARELOV, NIZAMOV and UMAROV. All three of those defendants came to the United States on temporary work visas, and had overstayed those visas at the time of their arrest in Baltimore. Using stolen identity and credit information, defendant CHUGAEV made on-line purchases of PayPal cards, gift cards, computers, and other merchandise, and requested that the items be shipped to United States addresses under the control of his associates. Those associates quickly withdrew cash from the credit cards, then deposited the cash into bank accounts, and allowed CHUGAEV to withdraw the stolen money in Russia using ATM cards associated with the bank accounts. The computers and other merchandise were repackaged by CHUGAEV's associates in the United States and mailed on to Russia, where the stolen goods were resold.

On May 10, 2006, the President established by Executive Order the Task Force on Identity Theft, chaired by the Attorney General, and comprising of representatives from 17 federal agencies. The Executive Order provided that it shall be the policy of the United States to use federal resources effectively to deter, prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute identity crimes, including through "increased aggressive law enforcement actions designed to prevent, investigate, and prosecute" such crimes.

All four defendants in the case are charged with conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, credit card fraud, and interstate transportation of stolen goods. The maximum sentence for that offense is five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a three year period of supervised release. Defendants CHUGAEV, KARELOV and NIZAMOV are also charged with wire fraud, for which the maximum penalty is 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a three year period of supervised release. Defendant CHUGAEV is also charged with multiple counts of mail fraud, which carries the same penalty as wire fraud, and is also charged with two counts of aggravated identity theft, which carries a mandatory penalty of two years in prison, consecutive to other sentences imposed.

The United States Attorney's Office observed that the charges in the Complaint and Superseding Indictment are only allegations, and that the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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